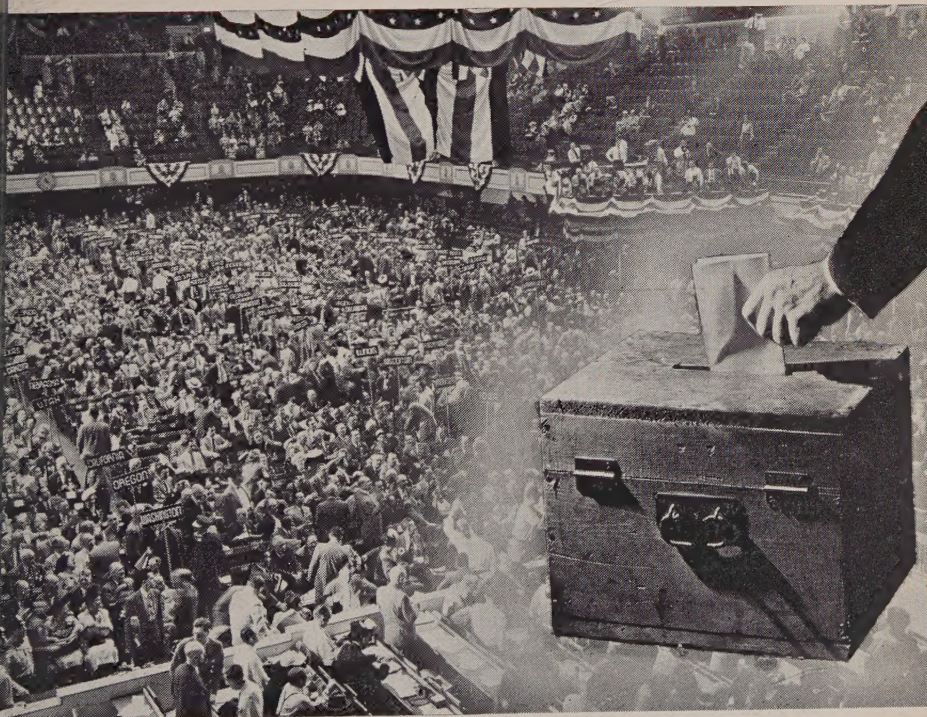


# SOCIAL ACTION

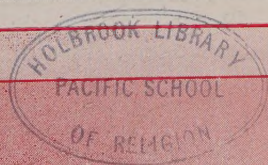
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OCTOBER 15, 1948



## *Behind and Beyond* **THE NOVEMBER ELECTION**

By Thomas L. Stokes



# SOCIAL ACTION

With WASHINGTON REPORT

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LISTON POPE

*Editor*

JENNIE EVANS

*Managing Editor*

THOMAS B. KEEHN

*Washington Correspondent*

EARL A. HOLMER

*Assistant to the Editor*

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*Ray Gibbons back cover*

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## About Thomas L. Stokes

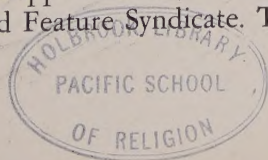
Feelings often run high in an election year. Partisanship easily supplants devotion to principle, and propaganda plays havoc with truth. Behavior at the polls is largely automatic rather than conscientious and thoughtful. Christians tend to respond primarily as Democrats, Republicans, or what not, rather than with a careful examination of alternatives in the light of the Christian faith.



Citizens for whom the election is a choice between white and black will dislike this number of *Social Action*. Citizens for whom the shades of gray are almost indistinguishable may be helped by it. For we have secured the services of a veteran and discerning political analyst in attempting to assess the men and issues involved in this complex campaign.

Thomas L. Stokes is one of America's best-known and most trusted newspaper columnists. His daily columns of political and social comment appear in more than one hundred newspapers scattered throughout the nation. Known as a liberal, he writes with such honesty and penetration that many conservative newspapers (including ten of the Scripps-Howard chain) are among his subscribers.

Mr. Stokes has been a Washington correspondent since 1921, first for the United Press, then for Scripps-Howard, and most recently as a columnist for the United Feature Syndicate. This



is therefore the seventh Presidential campaign he has covered. He attended the conventions of both major parties last summer, and more recently has been travelling on the campaign trains of Candidates Truman and Dewey.

Few newspapermen have been honored by their fellow craftsmen so lavishly as Thomas L. Stokes has been. He won the Pulitzer Prize for the most "distinguished example of reportorial work" in 1938. By poll of his fellow correspondents in Washington, Mr. Stokes was awarded the *Saturday Review of Literature* Award in 1944, for newspaper work "measured in terms of reliability, fairness, and ability to analyze the news." The White House Correspondents Association gave him the Raymond Clapper Award in 1947 for general excellence as a reporter, for his "crusading spirit," and for "fairness in reporting both sides of controversial questions." And in 1948 Mr. Stokes was given the National Headline Club award "for consistently outstanding syndicated daily column during 1947."

We are confident that readers of the following analysis by Mr. Stokes will agree, regardless of their political affiliations, with *Time's* estimate of him as "one of the nation's shrewdest, most diligent and forthright political reporters."

—L. P.

# ***Behind and Beyond***

## **THE NOVEMBER ELECTION**

**By Thomas L. Stokes**

November's national election will be watched with as keen interest from every other part of the earth as by us here at home. This is so, of course, because of the commanding role we now play in trying to bring order out of a world still in considerable disorder three years after the end of civilization's most destructive war.

### ***When There Is No Peace***

We have peace only in the sense that actual warfare is not being waged among the major nations. There is still guerrilla warfare here and there and elsewhere there are areas of friction and tension, incipient powder kegs, which at any time might be set off in an explosive chain reaction that would reverberate around the globe. These potential powder kegs are scattered about dangerously in a world where there is yet an apparent lack of determination for peace and no organized force with sufficient power and authority to enforce it. This is partly because of the suspicion held toward each other by the two great nations to whom the mortgage of a badly shattered world was of necessity entrusted—the United States and Russia.

There is a nominal peace, but no peace of mind which is essential to a real peace. Men and nations are jealous of each other, distrustful of each other. There is no faith, and too little hope. Out of all of this there comes the loose talk of a Third World War, which serves to measure the pessimism to which mankind has been reduced.

This truly tragic situation dramatizes the problem that will face those whom we will elect in November—a President, Vice



President and Congress to administer our affairs for the next four years.

### *Importance of Domestic Policy*

Our accepted role of leadership in the world not only magnifies the importance of our foreign policy as never before, but it accentuates also the importance of our domestic policy. Our influence and strength abroad, our ability to do what we have pledged ourselves to do, to carry out commitments that have been ratified by the representatives of our people in Congress—all that depends upon strength and stability in our own economy. Our own economy must be strong enough also to satisfy the needs of our own people so there will be no discontents at home that might distract us from the mission to the world. Foreign and domestic policy therefore constitute a unity as never before with us.

### *Uncertainties in the Election*

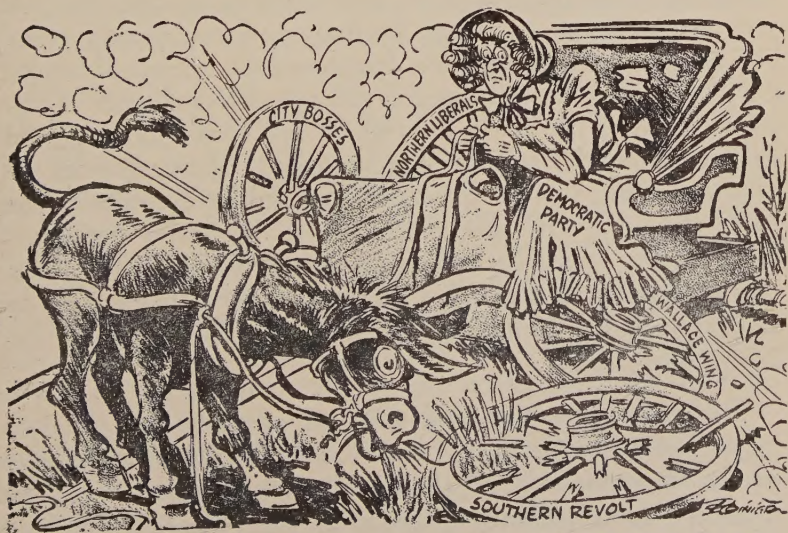
Despite the conceded importance of this election, it is not possible to forecast with any certainty just what a victory by either of the major parties would mean. This relates both to what the so-called "mandate" of the people might be interpreted to direct in the way of policy and to what those elected to manage our affairs intend exactly to do, or can do no matter what their intentions. Unpredictability is further magnified by the rapidity of developments all over the world, the quick changes that require improvising by the directors of our policy. It is also pertinent to ask how much the mere primitive "desire for a change" will influence the election.

There are confusions and divisions within our two major parties over policy, both domestic and foreign, and the general political confusion is further exemplified in the two splinter parties in our political field this year—one on the extreme left, the Henry Wallace Progressive Party, the other on the extreme right, the Southern anti-civil rights, states' rights party. While these two extremist groups do not appear too formidable, they

reveal the despairs and prejudices that often boil to the surface in times such as these and indicate, as well, a dissatisfaction with the established major parties.

### *Republican Ambiguities*

This situation causes the voter, who seems less sure than usual this year of what he is likely to get for his ballot, to ask the pointed questions that go to the heart of the matter. If he votes the Republican ticket, is he voting for the internationalism in foreign policy and the moderate progressivism in domestic policy of the candidates for President and Vice President, Governors Dewey and Warren, or is he voting for the nationalism in foreign policy and the extreme conservatism in domestic policy that are endorsed by an influential Republican faction which has its chief strength in the Midwest and is strongly entrenched in Congress and powerful there in policy-making, particularly in the House? Or is the voter casting his



*Pointier in The Detroit Free Press*

“The Wonderful One-Hoss Shay”



ballot for some unforeseeable compromise between the two viewpoints? The nationalist-conservative element of the Republican Party in the House showed its effectiveness by cutting appropriations for the European Recovery Program and all but wrecking the reciprocal trade program, damage which largely was repaired by the Senate.

As for the domestic program, this same element successfully blocked such social welfare measures as the Taft-Ellender-Wagner long-range housing bill and federal aid for education and health.

### *Democratic Ambiguities*

If the voter chooses the Democratic ticket, is he voting for the President Truman of the election campaign who fights belligerently under the bold colors of Franklin D. Roosevelt, or for the more conservative Truman of a year back who by his compromises on policy and his appointments disappointed the progressives in his party and by drawing military men about him as advisers in the top level frightened the friends of peace? Or is he voting for the standpat conservative influence in the party, chiefly from the South, which has consistently aligned itself with Republicans in Congress to stop any measures of the progressive sort that are generally regarded as representing the basic philosophy of government which the party espouses? Or is he, too, voting for some compromise that cannot be forecast accurately, or even for a stalemate such as has existed in Congress among Democrats on social welfare measures for several years now?

There you have the confusions and divisions in the two major parties. In the case of the Democrats, they finally drove extremists of the left and right into parties of their own. The internal conflict within the Republican Party has been confined without explosive eruption, partly because the party has been on the upgrade—a fact which tends to resolve differences.



## The Party Conventions

Political parties do have a way of rising, on occasion, above their internal differences and coming to an agreement on principles—after a vigorous fight, to be sure—which accommodates them more nearly to the needs of the times. That happened with both major parties, to a degree, at their national conventions at Philadelphia.

### *Triumph of Progressive Republicans*

While the Republican Party made compromises, the over-all result at Philadelphia, both in candidates and platform, was the rather decisive defeat of the nationalist-conservative wing of the party that had showed its power in Congress so short a time before. Both Dewey and Warren are representatives of the more progressive elements in the party, standing for our leadership in world cooperation and for modified intervention of the federal government along the economic and social welfare front. The platform reflected their viewpoint.

Whether by design or not, the Republican convention devised a pattern that will be helpful, if the party should win the election, in achieving a balanced administration of our international policy. The bursting of the Presidential boom for Senator Vandenberg, which had been inflated by the press and political experts in the few weeks before the convention with no positive encouragement from him, leaves him in a key position in the Senate as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, where his prestige and influence undoubtedly would be of great value in preserving the necessary continuity in our foreign policy. This is all to the good, whichever party wins the election. In either case the Michigan Senator can stand, as he has up to now, as a bulwark against the nationalists. With Senator Vandenberg remaining in his powerful position as Foreign Relations Committee Chairman, the line of authority from a Dewey-Warren Administration through

Congress would be maintained much more effectively than if he had been elevated to the White House himself.

### *The Candidates—and Congress*

If experience is any guide, it was fortunate too that Republicans chose their Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates from outside of Congress. Members of Congress who are transferred to the White House suffer from the initial handicap of familiarity which, while it may not exactly breed contempt, nevertheless plainly weakens a President in his dealings with a Congress in which he himself has served. His weaknesses are well known and that is not helpful in his new role of adversary, which is what he usually must become in relation to Congress under our system if he wants to exert leadership.

As a practical matter for the immediate campaign, it also was best strategically for Republicans not to have picked a candidate out of Congress because of the issue that President Truman is making—and with considerable justice—of the record of the 80th Congress. While Governor Dewey must accept some responsibility for the 80th Congress because his party controlled it and directed it, he nevertheless is not a target clearly in the line of fire as would have been the case for a candidate identified with Congress. His running-mate has the same advantage.

### *Democrats and Civil Rights*

At their convention, the Democrats also rose for a brief hour and on a fundamental issue above the bitterness and passion that provided the continual undertone of the convention. This was when a majority, after a noisy floor fight, upset the compromise civil rights program proposed by the Resolutions Committee and adopted a forthright declaration, offered by a militant minority on that committee, that was more in keeping with President Truman's own position. As Republicans had defeated their nationalist-strict conservative wing, so Democrats beat down the angry Southern conservative bloc,



with the result that all of the Mississippi delegation and half of the Alabama delegation walked from the convention to sound the call for a Southern states' rights party. The successful rank and file delegate revolt against the South, in the face of the avowed scheme of party leaders to compromise this basic issue as a sop to the South, greatly encouraged the hitherto depressed progressive elements of the party. It demonstrated some vestige of vitality still in a party which, in the drab and lifeless early stages of the convention, seemed to wear already the tragic mask of defeatism.

### *Truman — and Barkley*

As further encouragement to the delegates, there was the dramatic, early-morning appearance of their renominated President and party leader in a fighting role, boldly announcing from the platform his intention to call the Republican Congress back into special session, a challenge that aroused the convention to its only really spontaneous outburst of enthusiasm. This was tempered somewhat for the wise and knowing in that boisterous hall when they looked upon another figure on that platform, the 70-year-old party warhorse, Senator Barkley, their nominee for Vice President. Many observers reflected that a party confident of victory would hardly have chosen such an elderly figure, able and beloved though he was. He was a reminder of the past and, as well, a reminder of the warring elements now temporarily forgotten in the wild bedlam of the moment, for his selection had represented a compromise, a gesture toward the South to try to hold the party together.

### *A Look at the Record*

At their convention the Democrats had it drummed into their consciousness, even if somewhat monotonously in long cascades of catalogued oratory, that they have a really strong case to present to the country in the full record of accomplishment of their sixteen years of power: in reorganizing the na-

tion's economy that had been so badly broken down by the depression, in the graphic story of the winning of the war, in the solid list of achievements in the agencies set up to promote international cooperation and to preserve peace. In the last, in their exultation, they overstepped themselves by failing to give Republicans credit for their assistance—an omission which was quickly resented by leaders of the other party. But, all in all, it was a record that deserved better than a shattered party.

Again, as before, Democrats were running on the reform and war record of Franklin D. Roosevelt, but they also discovered, as the story of the last three years was recited, that his successor had piled up a really impressive record in the field of foreign policy, beginning with creation of the United Nations and its various adjuncts and ending with the European Recovery Program. This was something to tell the voters, and tell them often. The Democratic platform gave due emphasis to all this in a ringing way that was a contrast to the dejected spirit of the party's practical politicians as they looked upon the badly split ranks of a once dynamic and cohesive organization, realized the internal bitterness that had provoked the schisms, and recognized what a handicap this raised when it came to winning an election.

### *Both Parties Moving Leftward*

The events of both major party conventions reflected a trend that may become significant, not only for the November election, but also for the future. It has become almost a cliché to say that while the rest of the world moves to the left the United States is moving to the right. But there were at both conventions some contradictions of this, whether they will mean much eventually or not. There was a leftward shift at both conventions, not sharp but nevertheless noticeable.

This, in the case of the Republican Party, was manifest both in the candidates and in the platform. It is best illustrated by contrast, by pointing out that the Republican platform advo-



cated such things as public housing where private enterprise is unable to do the job and federal aid to education and health, whereas the Republican House leadership had blocked such measures in the 80th Congress and took particular pains, for example, at the special session after the platform was adopted to prevent action on the Taft-Ellender-Wagner housing bill even though it already had been approved by the Senate and the proper House legislative committee. It is interesting and significant that the platform urged in general terms an expanded development of public power, whereas the Republican Congress had adopted generally a more restrictive policy by reducing appropriations and by specific limitations on federal authority.

### *Progressive Candidates*

Governor Dewey's attitude is demonstrably more progressive than that of the conservative leadership of Congress, and the convention moved in that direction when it picked him instead of a more conservative candidate. In the selection of Governor Warren as Vice Presidential candidate the convention buttressed the progressivism of its ticket, as was evident in the grumbling among Old Guard leaders in the protracted all-night sessions with Governor Dewey from which the California Governor emerged as the choice, with particular protest on the ground that Governor Warren was for "socialized medicine" because of his sponsorship of a state health bill in California. The conservative element, which made its own bid for the Presidential nomination, was denied even second place on the ticket. It had captured second place four years ago in the nomination of John W. Bricker.

### *Democratic Progressivism*

The Democratic Party, at its convention, exhibited a strong leftward tendency in one general code of doctrine, its staunch adherence to the New Deal line despite criticism from within and without, and in two specific acts, adoption of the strong

civil rights plank and its platform declaration for repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act. The latter was somewhat unusual because many Democrats in Congress had voted for the bill originally and many had joined Republicans in voting to over-ride the President's veto of it. The Taft-Hartley repeal declaration was also another repudiation, in effect, of the southern wing of the party which had contributed many votes to its enactment.

None of this leftward shift was accidental at either convention. It was due to definite political pressures which, as has been the case in our recent history, have come predominantly from the left, as in all parts of the world. Its influence was first upon the Democratic Party as the more receptive, and, because of its inroads there, Republicans were constrained to adjust themselves too, even if mostly in lip service thus far.

### *Design for Victory*

The pressures upon the Democrats came both from moderate progressives and from more extreme New Deal and leftist elements, some of the latter cutting loose finally, as we have seen, to leave the party and join Henry Wallace. This progressive and leftist influence is concentrated in the big cities, where it embraces labor and minority groups. Through the Roosevelt years, these groups provided the margin of victory in the populous states with big electoral votes. Franklin D. Roosevelt was very conscious of that. So is Harry Truman. Without charging President Truman with insincerity, for he has long had a public record on civil rights and labor measures, this nonetheless helps to explain the emphasis on repeal of the Taft-Hartley Act and on the civil rights program.

This all fits into the desperate design of the Democrats for election victory. This year, because of the states' rights party, the Democrats are unable to lay a firm foundation for their election plans on a solid South, though it is likely that President Truman will carry some southern states. The design for victory calls for chief emphasis upon the East and



the Far West, particularly the Pacific Coast. The hope, and it is admittedly a slender one, is to put together sufficient states in the South and the Far West so that margin could be supplied by one or two or three big states in the East.

### *Influence of the West*

The importance of the West in Democratic plans was signified by President Truman's transcontinental trip in early June before the conventions. He not only spent most of his time there, but also proclaimed over and over the Democratic Party's ardent interest in the issues closest to the people in that area—water for reclamation for their agriculture and cheap public power to carry forward the industrial development upon which the West now has set its heart and which was given an impetus by the location of many war plants there.

The Democratic record on western issues is good. It has been constant and furthermore the party is closer to a common front on those issues than on any other, for the South likewise has a devoted interest now in public power development because of the example set for it in T.V.A. On this issue, unlike others, the members of Congress by and large follow their constituents which, curiously enough, include Chambers of Commerce. For power is intricately tied up with development of the South. And T.V.A. has pointed the way to cheap power.

The recognition of Republican weakness on western issues was responsible, to a considerable degree, for the nomination of Governor Warren as Vice Presidential candidate. He has the western viewpoint and is thoroughly informed on these issues and the way to present them from personal experience in his own state. He is carrying that part of the battle for his party. The Warren nomination for one thing, then, represented a leftward shift by Republicans in response to pressure from the Democrats.

## Campaign Issues and Strategies

### *Truman and 80th Congress*

There is no question that the Republican Party's stand at its convention for a social welfare program and for reclamation and public power development was the stronger because of President Truman's constant hammering on the party's derelictions in these matters in the 80th Congress. Republicans, it is true, had advocated a social welfare program embracing housing, aid to education and health and expansion of social security in their 1944 platform and it had been the objective to put through such a program in the second session of the 80th Congress, a plan that was nullified by the party's leadership in the House. They were moved to repeat their pledges, and in a more outspoken way, when they began to feel the effect of the President's reminders to the people in the plain and blunt language of his informal back platform speeches across the country.

Subsequently President Truman has capitalized on the failure of Republicans to do anything about their platform-pledged program at the short, two-week special session in July, beyond a housing bill that made no provision for public housing and which he therefore criticizes as wholly inadequate. But his special vitriol, and that of Democratic strategists, has been reserved for the special session's very limited anti-inflation measure that touched so few of the immediate and basic problems involved in runaway prices. The Republican platform is vague on this subject, confining itself to orthodox economic platitudes. Inflation, in truth, ballooned up into an issue that seemed to constitute the greatest danger to Republicans as the campaign got underway. It may turn out to be the big X, the unknown quantity that would sweep aside all calculations. That, at least, is the Democratic hope.



## Campaign Against Communism

There certainly appears to be some connection between this threat and the sudden revival of the Republican campaign against Communism, the double-barreled "spy scare" investigations at the Capitol by the Ferguson Committee of the Senate and the Un-American Activities Committee of the House which were opened up during the special session. The state of the world and the state of American nerves being what they are, the spurious issue known as "Communism in Government," meaning government by the Democratic Party, is



Thomas in The Detroit News

"Campaign Portraits"

a very convenient smoke-screen to cover up delinquencies by the Republican Congress. It was an effective issue in the 1946 elections, and it still seems to have potency.

### *Division Among Democrats*

The Republicans have pumped the Communist issue for all it was worth, counting upon this, evidently, to offset the 80th Congress issue, along with another very ready situation that Democrats themselves have contributed. This, of course, is the serious rift within Democratic ranks, which is one of the three principal handicaps that President Truman and his party face. Republicans have made it a major point of attack.

They thus dramatize a doubt already present in the public mind as to whether, because of divided ranks, the Democratic Party is any longer a functioning organism. What purpose can be served, Republicans ask, by returning the Democratic Party to power when it has demonstrated in Congress in the last few years that it cannot put through domestic programs espoused by its executives in the White House? They say nothing, of course, about their own contribution to this Democratic dilemma, and it is, of course, no excuse for Democrats that conservative southerners from their own ranks have joined in a coalition with Republicans since 1938 to obstruct legislation of the New Deal reform sort.

Toward the end of the war President Truman blithely tossed the whole uncompleted Roosevelt reform program at Congress, including expanded social security, standardization of unemployment benefits in all states through a federal statute, an increase in the minimum wage under the wage-hour act, national health insurance, and federal aid to education, among major measures. All he got from a Congress controlled by his own party was a watered-down version of the full employment act that his predecessor first had recommended. Thereafter, when Republicans took over in the 1946 elections, he recommended and urged the same program repeatedly, but in vain.

### *The Truman Administration*

On the domestic front of social and economic reform, the Democratic Party truly has been unable to function in recent years. This naturally began to discourage progressives. President Truman got most of the blame, as men in the White House do. Some blame can be attached to him for a general easing-off of the progressive crusading of the previous Administration, even if he is exempted from responsibility for failures in Congress due to circumstances largely beyond his control. The change in temper and tempo was by design. He made compromises, both in appointments and policies, that shifted his Administration to what might be called a middle-of-the-road course rather than the left-of-center of the earlier Roosevelt Administration.

President Truman also washed the New Deal coloration off of top administrative offices in his cabinet by replacing more zealous officials with more amiable and accommodating figures. As a result of these changes at the top, many able and energetic men in the second echelon below, both in the departments and in the special agencies, especially in the latter, became discouraged with the tenor and trend of the Administration and left of their own accord, while others were forced out, so that New Dealism, as such, disappeared almost completely from influential administrative posts. Some went out under dramatic circumstances in conflicts over the new compromise course, such as Wilson Wyatt, who was not in the government in New Deal days but was drafted as Housing Expediter by President Truman; Dillon S. Myer, Federal Housing Administrator; and Chester A. Bowles, OPA Administrator who quit when Congress continued OPA under an act that he did not consider sufficiently strong and did not care to try to administer.

### *Shifts by Truman*

President Truman himself retreated openly on the issue of continuation of government wartime controls under the public



clamor promoted by the Republicans and big interests, notably the National Association of Manufacturers. A few weeks before the 1946 Congressional elections, in a desperate counter-move to try to check an obviously rising Republican tide, he lifted controls on meats and a few weeks thereafter he removed controls on housing that Wilson Wyatt regarded as essential for his job of providing homes for war veterans. Even though Republicans had advocated abolition of controls beginning soon after the end of the war, the President's own hasty compromise to remove some of them on his own initiative complicated the issue as to who was to blame for runaway prices.

Out of the discontent of ex-New Deal officials who had left the Truman Administration either voluntarily or by compulsion there came a new progressive, anti-Communist organization in Americans For Democratic Action, ADA, which ultimately became active in seeking to prevent the President's renomination. This sort of pressure, along with that from the Henry Wallace extreme left, undoubtedly had its influence in the sharp shift of the President toward the left in the months before the convention at Philadelphia. His has been, truly, a zig-zag course, but so, as a matter of fact, had been Franklin Roosevelt's before him.

### *Desire for a Change*

A second handicap the Democrats face is the very obvious and evident "desire for a change" which began to show itself in the 1946 Congressional elections and which Republicans dramatized by their slogan, "Had Enough?" In politics, as elsewhere, people get tired of the same faces—perhaps more in politics than elsewhere, because the faces appear more often. Sports and sportsmen have their seasons; politics goes on every day of the year in some form or other. Politicians are always there, too, to blame for our troubles. They are natural scapegoats.

Observers at the Democratic convention were impressed by the presence of so many figures so long familiar. This spectacle gave point to the phrase used by Governor Dewey in the 1944 campaign: "tired old men." None have grown any younger since. Their age and number somehow symbolized the weariness and decrepitude of the party, the lack of fresh new figures, and the dearth of new ideas to cope with the problems of what is, in effect, a new kind of world.

### *Forget the Record*

Democrats have become identified with things people want to forget, most recently a war in which personal lives were regimented in ways that were never necessary before. Before the war, there was a depression which was a bitter experience, of which Democrats are a reminder even though they came along to do something about it after it had struck under a Republican regime. Along with the depression and as a part of the process of relief, there came reform, and people finally get tired of reform. Gratitude does not last any considerable length of time in the course of human events, so there is little political capital at this late date in recalling, to a people now prosperous and well fed and plentifully supplied with jobs, the time when there were millions out of work, when farmers were strapped and unable to meet their mortgage payments and foreclosures were the law of the land, when banks were closing their doors and unable to pay depositors—or to claim that the Democrats did something about all that. That is long ago and far away and people don't like to remember it or to be reminded of it.

Nor is there much political capital in reminding people that it was Democrats who directed the war and consequently naturally claim some credit for stopping the enemy beyond our shores. New enemies seem to be appearing now, or at least they are being raised up, and Democrats, being directly in charge of foreign affairs, get the blame for the fears and anxieties which beset our people today.

### *Deterioration of Democratic Machine*

The third basic handicap with which Democrats are burdened this year is organization weakness. The smooth-running, well-oiled state machines at the peak of New Deal ascendancy under Franklin D. Roosevelt are no more. In most key states the Democrats have in the intervening years lost control, so that they lack the effective political machinery that goes with control of state governments. There is much bickering and factional warfare among local leaders, as President Truman discovered on his trip across the country in June.

## **Future of the Parties**

As interesting as anything about this election is the effect it may have upon the two major parties. Though nothing very definite can be forecast, it is worthwhile to indulge in some speculation since it can start from certain known and previously demonstrated factors.

### *Democratic Prospects*

The Democratic Party offers the more intriguing problem chiefly because it has experienced such wholesale disintegration, and in seemingly so short a time. Not so long ago it was sailing triumphantly on, with the magnetic and majestic figure of Franklin D. Roosevelt on the bridge. Its rehabilitation seems sure, though it may emerge a somewhat different party. Necessarily it must be re-built along certain definite principles that it now espouses—even if not successfully at the present time. For the nation must have a progressive party, and it does not seem ripe yet, if it ever will be, for a labor party.

Since the Civil War the Democratic Party has served, by and large, as the party of opposition which was called into power only under extraordinary circumstances. It has come in to institute reforms, to bring the country up to date in some particulars and, that purpose served, has been retired in favor of a more normal, orthodox sort of regime—what Warren



## WHETHER THERE BE PROPHECIES

It is customary, and not altogether for intriguing newspaper or magazine copy, to proclaim the death of one or the other of our great parties every so often. How risky this is has been demonstrated twice in fairly recent times. The first was after the 1928 election when the doom of the Democratic Party was announced in some quarters because of the overwhelming defeat of Alfred E. Smith, who lost four states in the "solid South," and, when the votes were all counted, was left with the support of only eight states, six in the South and two in New England, Connecticut and Rhode Island. The party did seem almost irrevocably split by the passions stirred up within its ranks over prohibition and religion, Al Smith being a "wet" and a Catholic. Yet, four

years later, in the 1932 election, the Democratic Party swept to such an overwhelming victory with Franklin D. Roosevelt against Herbert Hoover, because of the depression that was spreading through the land, that the Republican Party's demise was then frankly announced by some bold political sages. But it survived that, and survived an even more disastrous defeat four years later when Governor Alfred M. Landon of Kansas carried only two states, Maine and Vermont, as contrasted with the six Herbert Hoover had won four years previously. The Republican Party began a come-back in the 1938 Congressional elections and has gradually gained the strong strategical situation it occupies today.

— T. L. Stokes

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Harding called "normalcy." We seem to be, basically, a conservative sort of people.

### *Eclipse of Democratic Party*

It seems that the Democratic Party has, for the time being, served such a purpose and is done with it. It was bound to fly apart, because of the conflicts inherent within it, when no great leader and no great objective were at hand to unite its ever-present factions. It is a hybrid organism at best, and a cat fight at worst. It draws, for its occasional victories, upon all kinds of people not normally Democrats, upon independents and even upon those normally though not dyed-in-the-wool Republicans who flock to it in times of emergency and distress. For there obviously are more born-and-bred Republicans in the country than born-and-bred Democrats.

Franklin Roosevelt held the party together longer than might have been reasonably expected, due in part to the times and their recurring crises. It was rather plain at the 1944 conven-

tion to anyone who shuttled back and forth between the leaders of the bitterly contending factions there, the Southerners and the Eastern labor and progressive captains, and heard the names they called each other, that the party probably could survive only one more election victory before its eclipse for a time, and that because of the war and President Roosevelt's political skill and finesse.

### *Analogy to Whigs*

But the party is dead by no means, even though some aspects of its present state are comparable to the dilemma that preceded the disappearance of the Whig Party in the 1850's. The Democratic Party is bitterly split over a modern aftermath of the issue that split the Whigs and eventually destroyed that party. Slavery was the issue then. Today it is whether the Negro should get the full rights guaranteed to him by our Constitution.

In that era the Democratic Party itself finally broke into three separate parts, with three conventions and three sets of candidates in the field against Abraham Lincoln in 1860. But it survived that division. There is almost a parallel now in the Wallace and Southern split-offs from the Democratic Party.

### *The Southern Revolt*

The open break in the South this year, finally achieved after so many threats, should serve to throw some light on the strength of the extreme conservative, states' rights, anti-civil rights forces—that is, on how many will go all the way to leave the traditional Democratic Party. Much depends, of course, on the extent to which the new party gets on the ballot.

Interesting to watch at the same time will be the Republican vote this year in the South. The real hope of the South is a two-party system under which people who hold conservative views would vote Republican and those who incline toward progressivism would vote the Democratic ticket. There are many of Republican viewpoint in the South who regularly vote the Democratic ticket because that party represents gov-

ernment and tradition in the South. It is the party of business and social respectability. To vote Democratic is the thing to do. It plays havoc, of course, with the operation of politics on a sound and sensible basis.

If the Southern party fails to make much of a showing, whatever the reasons, that will tend to encourage the progressive forces in the Democratic Party in the South and, if accompanied at the same time by a substantial Republican vote, that should revive hope for an eventual two-party system in the South. If the Democratic Party had a progressive base in the South, it could become nationally a true progressive party. It would not then be hampered by the constant inner turmoil and the necessity for continued compromise that lead eventually and inevitably to such disintegration as has set in now. The South then would become a real battleground for both major parties, along with the rest of the country, as it should be, and would have the brisk competition in political philosophies that is essential to the best government.

### *Republican Party Prospects*

The shape and form in which the Republican Party comes from the campaign and the election are important for the party, the nation and the world, whether it wins or loses the election. Its internal conflicts lack the dramatic and explosive character of those which literally rock the Democratic Party today, but they too are deep-seated, as shown by the sturdiness of the conservative-nationalist wing which, though unsuccessful at the convention this year, met with considerable success in Congress where the test will come again.

While Governor Dewey praised the Republican Congress in a press conference before his nomination (a procedure which, incidentally, contrasted with the more skeptical view taken at the time by Governor Warren), he sought to divorce himself later from too close identity with its record by shaping his own program for the campaign, which differed in some respects from the trend in Congress.



### *Dewey's Chances*

Answers as to the policy of the Republican Party, in event it wins the election, must largely await the future. Campaigns never reveal much on that score. It might depend somewhat upon the size of the victory. A landslide would give Governor Dewey a powerful "mandate," as it is called, which simultaneously would give him wide influence, for it would yield not only prestige that would be reflected in Congress but it also would provide a workable majority in Congress. In a close election there is a possibility, much speculated upon during the campaign, that Republicans might lose the Senate while capturing the White House and the other branch of Congress. This, however, does not seem likely. It would break a well-authenticated precedent that Congress always goes with the White House in a Presidential election.

Beyond the prestige and influence resulting from a safe victory at the polls, Dewey also would have a potent weapon always available to a President at the beginning of his term and effective during his early years. That is the disposition of patronage. It is a weapon of practical politics which, wisely used, can accomplish a great deal in the hands of a strong President who knows which way he is going and what he wants to do. Franklin Roosevelt demonstrated that.

### *An Unknown Quantity*

Though Governor Dewey has a long public record, it still is impossible to forecast in advance with him, as it has been with others in the past, just what sort of a President he would make. He is, like the others, much of an unknown quantity in that respect. This is the gamble that voters always take, and there is nothing much that can be done about it. Franklin D. Roosevelt turned out as President to be a quite different figure than some had expected, and he, too, went to the White House from the governor's chair at Albany, and his public record was equally as well known as that of Governor Dewey.

A young man of proved drive and energy, the Governor of New York would appear to have the opportunity, if elected, to translate the victory at the convention of the more progressive, internationally-minded element of his party, certified and approved as it would be by the people, into a policy for his party representative of that re-orientation. By the caliber of his appointments, he might re-shape the party into something other than it appears when one analyzes its record in Congress.

### ***Republican Metamorphosis***

He has one advantage derived from a bit of history. This is that the party's position as taken at its convention is the result of a slow and gradual struggle within itself through the years. It was an ordeal, so to speak, by fire. There is quite a difference now when you look back to the isolationism of the party before the Second World War. The late Wendell L. Willkie had a great deal to do with the shift in the party's position though he got little thanks for it. Afterward it was the influence of Senator Vandenberg, himself a pre-war isolationist, which kept the party moving forward consistently in support of a strong policy of international cooperation.

Tom Dewey is as unlike such a figure as Theodore Roosevelt as it is possible to be, perhaps. But he has an opportunity, if elected, to make his party into somewhat the same vigorous force that it was for a time under that redoubtable figure. Circumstances are propitious. The times call for that.

### ***Government by Coalition***

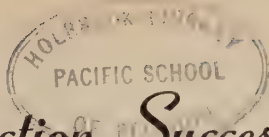
Whoever is elected President has one big dilemma, which is outside of him and relates to our party structures today. Truman has suffered with it. So did Roosevelt before him. That is division within the ruling party. What we have had in this country in the last few years, and it stands out in disturbing silhouette as we look backward, is coalition government—and coalition not by choice as sometimes happens in national emergencies, but by force of circumstances.

Roosevelt and Truman were hamstrung in their domestic aims by a coalition against them, so that Congress for a long time was in effect, on domestic policy, in control of what amounted to another party. Dewey undoubtedly must have Democratic support on both foreign and domestic policy to offset certain defections, if we may judge from the recent past, in the conservative-nationalist wing of his party.

Facing such a world situation as exists today with a divided front in the party in power is not a pleasing prospect. Both parties suffer from the disease, as has been shown here. Finding a remedy is perhaps as important as the election itself, and is a problem to which our best minds should give their attention. It is important that the citizen know what he is voting for and that he is reasonably sure of what he is getting when an election is over. It is doubtless unlikely that we will ever have a rigid alignment of parties in this country as between conservative and progressive because of the very size of our country and the regional differences over national policy. There probably will always be some differences within the parties, each with its conservative and progressive elements. As has been argued, some resilience may be a good thing in order that, no matter what party is in power, every citizen may feel that he has some sort of representation within it. It makes for less sharp changes when one party succeeds another, which also may be a good thing. But the internal differences should not be so sharply defined or so antagonistic as now—that is, if we are to get the best government for ourselves and do our best for the rest of the world.

Today, more than ever, we need some assurance of stability, and so does the rest of the world.





# Social Action Success Story

*A clearing house for stories of successful social action projects is greatly needed, in order that inspiration and "know-how" may be shared more widely. SOCIAL ACTION proposes to publish such stories from time to time, if readers will contribute them. Manuscripts should be limited ordinarily to 500 words; they may deal with race, housing, industrial relations, international cooperation, or any other important areas of social concern. Reports on significant ventures of past years, as well as on current projects, are solicited.—The Editors*

## The Baltimore Plan

By GERALD MONSMAN

A general discontent among Christian people with the manner in which they are discharging their responsibilities as citizens is becoming clearly evident. Dr. Cavert of the Federal Council of Churches is reported as having expressed his concern recently at Amsterdam at the "disturbing discrepancy" between the numerical size of the church in the United States and its positive influence on the life of the nation. It is not only the clergy who are concerned with this phenomenon. Laymen are likewise concerned, and when it comes to areas of social and political influence, they feel a particular responsibility.

For this reason movements are afoot among Christians in more than one locality to assume their full share of responsibility in civic life, with special attention to the political area. One such movement started in Baltimore about a year ago. It had its inception in a study group on Christian citizenship at the Baltimore Y.M.C.A. The discussions of this group resulted in the publication of a leaflet entitled "An Invitation to Christian Citizenship." Copies of the leaflet were sent to interested persons and to a number of church leaders, both lay and clerical, throughout the country to ascertain whether concurrence in

the proposals was general enough to warrant an attempt at organization.\*

The consensus of opinion seemed to be that an experiment should be made in one or more communities with the type of concerted Christian action which was envisaged. Pursuant to this reaction an organizing committee was formed. This group submitted a statement of purpose and objectives for approval to a larger group of about fifty men at a dinner meeting last December. That larger group proceeded with plans already made for a general public "launching" meeting. That meeting was held in a downtown church and attended by approximately a thousand persons. The principal address was made by Congressman Walter H. Judd and that assured a highly successful meeting.

### *The Plan at Work*

From that point on emphasis has been on trying to build up a membership for the organization so that it may gain strength; organize this membership on the precinct and ward levels; and prepare these local units for the down-to-earth, door-to-door, leg work of practical politics. So far there are about four hundred members enrolled, who live in about one-fourth of Baltimore's precincts, as well as in the counties adjacent to Baltimore. The promise for growth is very encouraging. Membership is only one dollar a year, which is the only source of income. All work to date has been volunteer and on a spare-time basis.

The primary characteristics of the Baltimore movement are these:

1. The movement looks to the churches for guiding principles, but not for political action. Official church pronouncements will constitute the platform which it will seek to implement.
2. It believes that Christians acting unitedly as *citizens*, not as church members, should assume responsibility for practical political action.
3. The movement maintains that to be significant and enduring it should not be merely a "better government" movement, but must be specifically Christian, built on a common loyalty to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.
4. Because it is specifically Christian, it is definitely set against

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\*For further information, write to the author at 11 Burnbrae Road, Baltimore 4, Md.

discriminations. It is not an anti-movement in any sense of the term—neither anti-race, nor anti-color, nor anti-creed; but is positively and affirmatively Christian in all these relationships.

5. It is neither radical nor conservative, neither to the right nor to the left, but occupies, with the church, a position over and above these consistent with a forthright acceptance of the principles of New Testament Christianity.

6. It is not a new political party, but a new technique for influencing the existing parties.

7. It is not non-partisan, but multi-partisan. It seeks to encourage Christians to assume active roles in the parties of their own selection.

8. The point of departure is not an issue, a program or the endorsement of a specific candidate. That will, no doubt, all come in due course. The starting point is rather a determination to arouse the latent Christian forces to their potential strength by working for a full registration of Christian voters, keeping them informed, and bringing them out in all elections, especially the primaries, which are now much neglected.

9. These Christian voters should be organized on the precinct and ward levels—right where the political machines begin. The permanent organization, when built, will be such as to gear into the political structure of the community.

10. Long-range Christian motivation in living is the real objective. Therefore, the movement will not be discouraged by failure to attain immediate objectives, if that should be the case. It looks to the creation of a new sense of the dignity, the lofty, religious character of political action.

The organization, which is known as the United Christian Citizens, is proceeding with caution and energy. All steps are planned with utmost care and deliberation by men familiar with practical politics. For this is practical politics in the highest and best sense of that term.

There is abundant evidence that the fire of God has touched the surface of our lives in these matters, but it has not set us on fire. We cherish the hope that we may help kindle that fire and let it sweep through our communities and over our country, until by the light of that fire men shall know that we have sanctified Christ in our hearts as Lord of all of life, including our political life.



# WASHINGTON REPORT



October 15, 1948

By Thomas B. Keehn

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## THE ISSUE BEHIND THE ISSUES

America is torn between hope and fear as the deadline for the 1948 election draws near. New faces, new issues, new economic and political forces will appear on the national scene. In all probability, the Republican party will return to power after coming in second for sixteen years. The searching question which confronts every conscientious citizen is: will this result increase or decrease the chances for peace and justice in our time?

In one sense, the political changes in 1948 will all be superficial. Republican or Democrat, conservative or liberal, the task of government in the period ahead cannot be radically altered. The old adage that everything changes but everything remains the same was never more true. International tension, high prices, civil rights—

these and other issues confront the people and government of the United States as a body politic. No election can change this situation.

Actually, however, political forces of fundamental importance are at work in America and the world today. These forces run deeper than political parties or campaign oratory. They are even more basic than controversial domestic and international issues. Although unclear and still below the surface, these political forces are seen in the ambiguities of the 1948 election: in contradictions within the major parties, in the absence of clear-cut policies on fundamental issues, in the emergence of splinter parties and regionalism as political factors, and in the role of the omnipresent pressure groups.

The issue behind the issues

in 1948 is the nature of the political order itself. An examination of the political order in America and throughout the world, and the changes which it is undergoing, will shed light on the complex political situation. It will help explain parties, candidates and issues, and provide perspective for perplexed voters.

The essence of politics is order, that is, the absence of anarchy. Any man-made instrument which fulfills this purpose will be less than perfect. It must be a compromise. Every political change in this order is only partial. It is part of a larger continuity. Although political changes are always imperfect and partial, therefore, there are occasions when they are of such magnitude as to constitute a new order. American government has reached such a point today. This is partly a reflection of world-wide political factors and partly the result of internal conditions.

The first characteristic of political order throughout the world today is that old centers of authority and power have disintegrated and new centers have not yet congealed. It is clear that the new political constellation of the world must be

God give us the serenity to accept what cannot be changed; give us the courage to change what can be changed; give us the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.

—From a prayer by  
REINHOLD NIEBUHR

weighted on the side of international as contrasted to national authority. This transition, now in progress, is painful and precarious. It produces the bitter poison of fear and tension, hate and hysteria. But if civilization is to survive, mankind must construct a new order which will encompass and control these fears and hates.

This task is complex and it will take time. Some would simply extend American political principles to a world government as the logical solution of this difficult problem. But a new world political authority cannot be organized by logic alone. It will happen when a particular combination of economic, social and political factors is present, and not before. Institutions which endure must be rooted in genuine communities. They cannot be built in response to shock and fear, even the fear of an atomic war.

The second characteristic of

political change today is the relative importance of politics as compared to economic and cultural factors. This is the essential meaning of the fact that the world — including the United States — is moving to the left politically. Just as peace demands the gradual development of new international institutions with political power, so justice in our interdependent, industrialized society depends upon greater community action through government.

Politicians still take pokes at bureaucrats and make promises of economy in government. But bureaucrats are here to stay. Senator Barkley's crack at the Democratic convention is already a classic: a bureaucrat is defined as a Democrat who has a job a Republican wants. Economies may well be possible on all levels of government; but

it will never again be true that the best government is one which governs least. Nor will government serve primarily as a penal institution—to restrain sinners from evil ways. Government will play a positive role in the new political order in economic regulation, social welfare and foreign policy.

The 1948 campaign reveals a consensus among the major parties on the responsibility of government for peace and justice which is of historic significance. There will be differences in emphasis and methods between the parties and conflicts within the parties. But for the two overarching reasons presented here, there will be a "shaking down" of the political order which will set the general direction of American politics—Republican or Democrat—in the years ahead.

## THE CHURCH AND THE POLITICAL ORDER

What does the church have to say about the problems of power and change, peace and justice, which are central to the new political order which is emerging?

Protestant political theory holds that government itself is morally ambiguous. It is both

necessary and necessarily dangerous. It is susceptible to either good or evil influences. Government should seek a delicate balance between freedom and security; it must avoid the extremes of anarchy and tyranny.

Demands of peace and justice in this period of history require



a greater sphere for the political order on a world level and in the United States. But this does not imply an uncritical endorsement of political authority. Democratic government must be pluralistic rather than monolithic in structure. This requires checks and restraints on authority. It depends in the last analysis upon an informed and responsible citizenry. Free and creative action is therefore essential in the economic and cultural fields.

Within this general framework, the criteria by which the church seeks to criticize and guide society have been reformulated in the last generation. Recently two European theologians, Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, attempted to state the church's position toward the political order, particularly toward the Communist-dominated governments of Eastern Europe.

Barth held that there is no system of guiding principles by which the church can judge the political order. In fact, the church has nothing to do with rational principles. Sometimes it should speak and sometimes it should be silent. Every situation is different. In essence, the church has nothing positive to say about the political order but

acts only when it is tempted, when the authority is intolerable, tyrannical, pagan. Then, says Barth, the church speaks for its Lord, not for principles deduced by human reason.

Brunner on the other hand held that totalitarianism—tyranny—is a recognizable evil. When it appears in the form of fascism or communism, when freedom is sacrificed, when man is reduced to a means, then the church cannot remain silent and be the church. It is opposed to the total state in principle; it stands for justice and peace in principle because they are ethical demands of the Christian faith.

There is wisdom in both of these positions for the church and Christians today. The church must give only tentative and uneasy loyalty to any social order. From Barth, the church can remember that it takes orders from no one, that it serves everyone in the name of its Lord.

But the church also has ethical principles derived from its faith to guide its actions. Here the Amsterdam assembly of the World Council of Churches, meeting in August, 1948, supported the position taken by

theologian Brunner. The report on "The Church and the Disorder of Society" reveals that these churchmen were well aware of the "vast concentrations of power" which characterize modern society, and that these centers of power are generally unresponsive to individual or voluntary group action. This is the root of the inevitable pattern of change—political change—which is everywhere in our time.

Protestant churchmen have tended to respond to this situation in two extreme ways. The majority has attempted to find security in the old order, to sanctify the status quo. A minority has been tempted to chase easy panaceas, such as pacifism, world government or communism.

The Amsterdam meeting of the World Council of Churches reached a profound and realistic resolution of this dilemma when it stated:

On the one hand, we must vindicate the supremacy of persons over purely technical considerations by subordinating all economic and cherished rights to the needs of the community as a whole. On the other hand, we must preserve the possibility of a

satisfying life for "little men in big societies."

Civilization stands between two periods of history. There are no easy answers to the problems confronting mankind. The important thing is to ask the right questions, and then to find proximate answers. These questions must be directed to the real issues of the day: the need for reasonable military strength as an instrument of foreign policy; the responsibility of government for economic justice and social welfare; the role of government in guarding civil rights.

The church can contribute most to the building of a new order by standing for a balanced, responsible attitude toward political power and change. It can lend perspective provided by ethics grounded in faith rather than expediency. Its members can support specific, tentative forward steps toward peace and justice without becoming either cynical defenders of the past or sentimentalists with a "Christian answer" for every problem. This is the wisdom of Amsterdam and the Christian faith which speaks to men everywhere who are perplexed, but not unto despair.

## THE CHRISTIAN AS CITIZEN

The church has a tremendous responsibility for the political order. Does Christianity have any special guidance for the American citizen in the 1948 election?

The thoughtful person, looking at the political alternatives in 1948, finds the decision unusually difficult. He is aware of the terrible necessity of choosing the lesser evil. But this is very unsatisfying in 1948 when neither choice is exciting or inspiring. In this circumstance, he is intrigued by the message of *The Plague*, new symbolic novel by the French writer Albert Camus. Modern man is confronted with an almost hopeless dilemma because every course of action is bad. Therefore, says Camus, in this situation *there is a stand which consists in not taking a stand*. As applied to American political parties and the 1948 election, this would mean standing aside and saying "a plague on both your houses." All the man of good intentions can do is to hang around and help clean up the mess.

While this is an understandable psychological reaction, for a Christian at least it just won't

do. The divine imperative speaks to him with authority and compels him to act. There is no simple instruction to guide him in deciding between the elephant and the donkey.\* But decide he must! And in a way unique to a democratic society, his action will make a difference.

This kind of citizenship requires maturity and a certain kind of sophistication. It must combine a hardness necessary to deal with political realities and a sensitivity to essential human and social values.

One of the responsibilities of citizenship which has emerged with unusual clarity in 1948 is the necessity for conscientious citizens to participate actively in political organizations. Christian citizens have been inclined to regard political parties as dirty business in which they could not participate without soiling their own pure principles. They have either done nothing or they have escaped to the protection of some "independent, non-partisan" group which operated

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\*This statement indicates agreement with the analysis by Stokes in this issue of *Social Action* which dismisses the Progressive and Dixiecrat parties as fringe groups.

on the periphery of the political process without really getting involved in it.

But the heart of politics in America is the political organization. This is exactly where Christian citizens belong. It means attending party meetings and caucuses, ringing door bells, passing out literature, giving speeches. In some cases it means running—and it is indeed almost literally just that—for office. The simple truth is that while it is important to write your Congressman and work on issues through some organization in which you have confidence, nevertheless, behind the lobby group, behind the letter, even behind the Congressman is the political organization. Here citizenship begins.

Personal virtue and humanitarian motives are important for all citizens. But the person who really gets “in politics” by actively participating in a political organization will either get pushed around or suffer disillusionment unless he combines realism with high ethical and religious faith. Good motives are not enough. In politics, one must calculate the consequences of every action if he intends to stay in the business. Political organizations are the

supreme example of compromise in the sense that, out of the differences in the group, a program is fashioned which represents the will of the majority. What politics desperately needs today is the participation of citizens who have strong convictions and are willing to test them in the crucible of group decision.

The symbolic and ultimately important act of citizenship in a democracy is voting. The individual must do a harder thing than standing apart. In casting his ballot, he must testify to his belief in community. By conscientiously exercising his right of franchise, the citizen is fulfilling his responsibility to his fellow man in a practical and idealistic way.

It is indeed difficult to analyze the issues in the 1948 election, to see this election in relation to the political process as a whole, and to arrive at a decision. Nevertheless, a Christian citizen cannot be a political eunuch. Every vote in 1948 is of supreme importance. The proper use of the ballot is a religious duty. There is a kind of mystery which surrounds a voting booth: for once inside, you stand there alone with your



conscience. Although Christianity cannot tell a citizen in 1944, 1948 or any other time how to vote, it can remind him of the sacredness of the act and insist that he discharge this responsibility in a conscientious manner after careful thought and meditation. This issue of *Social Action* with *Washington Report* is dedicated to helping Christian citizens act in this way.

The health of democratic so-

ciety depends upon the private consciences of men. Protestant churches had much to do with the making of such men, and through them, with the building of democratic political institutions. Today, as many years ago, the church must bring the discipline of religious fellowship and the righteous judgment of God to bear upon its members, particularly as they vote and act as citizens in a democratic nation.

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## BESIDE A BALLOT BOX

(A Meditation)

It took a thousand years to shape this box.  
Only by centuries of struggle was that lock fastened  
upon it to preserve my ballot in honor.

One generation of men after another beat themselves  
against the door to this room, and died upon its  
threshold, before it opened to let me enter and choose  
my government.

Dreamers and poets of liberty; martyrs and prophets  
of truth; soldier and seamen; statesmen and  
philosopher; all who have labored and suffered in the  
costly human march toward freedom—these are my  
unseen companions beside the ballot box today.

—P. R. HAYWARD,  
*International Journal of*  
*Religious Education*  
November, 1936

# On To Action

*The Presidential campaign and this issue of SOCIAL ACTION with WASHINGTON REPORT raise the question of how a Christian should seek to influence the political life of the nation. Should he make a "scientific" approach and seek to introduce more rational methods of running government? Would more public opinion polls, filing of campaign expenditures or registration of lobbyists improve the course of politics? Obviously not very much. Would the pronouncement of some church body, such as the Federal Council of Churches, introduce moral principles and lift the contest from a strife for power to the consideration of principles? Moral and religious judgments are desperately needed but they must pertain to the specific, emerging issues at many points. There is no one "pronouncement" which would have enduring relevance to or influence upon the ongoing complex political scene.*

*What this issue of the magazine clearly points out is the importance of participation by Christian citizens through voting, party organization and pressure upon legislation. Through such participation are won the insight, skill and judgment required to make Christian principles pertinent and effective. This is a price many convinced Christians are unable or unwilling to pay, but such participation is desperately needed. Not only is the outcome of great moment for peace, order and justice in our world, but also for the Christian enterprise itself. Unless the church is to retreat to the monastery, it must make its message more relevant to the economic and political orders, where people care so deeply that they fight for their causes.*

*What is true nationally is also true in our community approach to social action. Surveys, studies, forums are all right in their place but they are not primary tools of social change. The wills of people determine the outcome, and social action is the introduction of new wills into the struggle—wills concerned about other values than self-interest and power, such as justice, order and freedom. But these values, too, must be wrought out in the fires of conflict. This knowledge of forces, this skill and understanding, comprise the art of the statesman, but are unknown to the armchair politician. To this political participation Christian citizens are challenged today, both in their communities and in the nation.*

*Ray Gibbons*